

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Federal Agency Name(s):** Economic Development Administration (EDA), Department of Commerce.
- **Funding Opportunity Title:** University Center (UC) Program
- **Announcement Type:** Initial Announcement
- **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number(s):** 11.303, Economic Development – Technical Assistance
- **Dates:** Proposals must be received by 5:00 p.m. local time at the appropriate EDA regional office by Friday, May 14, 2004.
- **Proposal Submission:** - Paper submission to:

From proponents in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas:
Economic Development Administration
Austin Regional Office
327 Congress Avenue, Suite 200
Austin, Texas 78701

From proponents in Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming:
Economic Development Administration
Denver Regional Office
1244 Speer Boulevard, Room 670
Denver, Colorado 80204

NOTE: During FY 2004 EDA is soliciting competition proposals for University Center funding only in the areas served by these two EDA regional offices.

- **Funding Opportunity Description:** The mission of EDA is to help our partners across the Nation create wealth and minimize poverty by promoting a favorable business involvement to attract private capital investment and higher-skill, higher-wage jobs through world-class capacity-building, planning, infrastructure, research grants and strategic initiatives. With funding from EDA, University Centers provide technical assistance to public and private sector organizations with the goal of enhancing local economic development.

EDA traditionally renewed an award to a University Center on an annual basis as long as it maintained a satisfactory level of performance and Congress appropriated funds for the program. EDA is beginning to phase in competition for University Center funding.

- In FY 2004 EDA will open competition for University Center funding in EDA's Austin regional office (which serves Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas) and the Denver regional office (which serves Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming.)
- In FY 2005 EDA will open competition for University Center funding in the Philadelphia and the Chicago regional offices. In FY 2006 EDA will open competition for University Center funding in the Atlanta and the Seattle regional offices.

EDA does not anticipate creating or funding any additional new University Centers outside of the competitions held in FY 2004, FY 2005 and FY 2006, unless a University Center withdraws from the program or does not perform to EDA's satisfaction. In such cases, the appropriate EDA region may choose to hold an intervening competition. See the full notice for a complete description of how EDA will implement the competition for University Center funding in FY 2004 and future years and how it will affect currently funded University Centers.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The mission of EDA is to help our partners across the Nation create wealth and minimize poverty by promoting a favorable business involvement to attract private capital investment and higher-skill, higher-wage jobs through world-class capacity-building, planning, infrastructure, research grants and strategic initiatives. Institutions of higher education have many assets, such as faculty, staff, libraries, laboratories, and computer systems, which can help to address local economic problems and opportunities. With funding from EDA, institutions of higher education establish and operate University Centers, which provide technical assistance to public and private sector organizations with the goal of enhancing local economic development.

B. Program Priorities

EDA encourages the submission of investment proposals that will significantly benefit areas with distressed economies. Distress may exist in a variety of forms, including, but not limited to: high levels of unemployment, low income levels, large concentrations of low-income families, significant declines in per capita income, substantial loss of population because of the lack of employment opportunities, large numbers (or high rates) of business failures, sudden major layoffs or plant closures, military base closures, natural or other major disasters, depletion of natural resources or reduced tax bases.

EDA believes that local economic development occurs primarily due to investments and decisions made by the private sector. EDA will give preference to proposals that focus on fostering higher-skill, higher-wage jobs and attracting private capital investment to the economic region served by the proposed University Center. Programs not focused on economic development activities that foster higher-skill, higher-wage job creation and private sector investments are encouraged to seek financial support from other sources.

EDA will also consider proposals for University Center funding that focus on research, that fulfill a unique niche that is highly prized by local, regional or national, public or private economic development entities.

EDA will not fund University Centers that operate in isolation from other resources at the institution of higher education receiving the award.

C. Program Authority

The authority for the University Center program is the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, as amended (Pub. L. 89-136, 42 U.S.C. § 3121, et seq.) and as further amended by Pub. L. 105-393.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

A total of \$8,346,000 in appropriations is expected for EDA's technical assistance programs in FY 2004. EDA expects to allocate \$7,179,311 to the University Center program and the remaining funds to EDA's Local and National Technical Assistance programs.

The amount of University Center funding available for competition in FY 2004 is \$795,217 in the Denver regional office and \$978,502 in the Austin regional office. Anticipated annual awards for University Centers under the FY 2004 competition are in the \$75,000 to \$200,000 range. Regional offices may, however, choose to fund proposals under this competition outside that range. The remaining FY 2004 program funds will be used to continue support for current University Centers.

B. Project/Award Period

In its FY 2000 NOFA, EDA designated the University Center program as a multi-year program. Beginning in FY 2004, EDA will begin to implement this multi-year concept. This announcement provides notice of EDA's intent to begin administering the University Center program as a competitive multi-year program beginning in FY 2004. (EDA's regulations, 13 CFR 307.7(a), state, "EDA will provide assistance for the period of time required to complete the project scope of work, generally not to exceed twelve months." For the awards made under the competition anticipated under this announcement, the period of time required to complete the project scope of work will be three years.)

Under this multi-year program designation, EDA will approve a three-year project period for each University Center selected for funding under the competition initiated in FY 2004. An EDA regional office may fully fund a proposal selected under the competition for the full three-year period, or alternatively, may provide funding year-to-year. If the year-to-year funding option is utilized, the University Center will not have to compete for the second and third year of funding. Funding beyond the initial year would be dependent upon the availability of funds and satisfactory performance, as determined by EDA. The decision of whether to fully fund a three-year award or provide funding on a year-to-year basis will be made by the regional office at the time the award is made. However, it is anticipated that most regional offices will provide funding on a year-to-year basis under this competition.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Under this solicitation, EDA will fund University Centers as grants with a three-year project period. As noted earlier, however, funding may be provided on an annual basis.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants and eligible recipients of EDA financial assistance are defined at 13 CFR § 300.2. For the University Center program, EDA considers all accredited institutions of higher education as eligible applicants.

For FY 2004 the University Center competition is open to eligible applicants in areas served by EDA's Denver regional office and Austin regional office. The Denver regional office serves the states of Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming. The Austin region serves the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

Any institution of higher education seeking EDA funding under this program must provide financial support for its proposed University Center. Ordinarily, the proposed budget for the University Center is shared on a 50/50 basis between EDA and the applicant. The proposed budget may be shared on up to a 75/25 basis between EDA and the applicant if the project is not feasible without, and merits, a reduction or waiver of the non-Federal share. In addition, a project is eligible for a supplemental grant increasing the Federal share up to and including 75 percent when the applicant is able to demonstrate that: 1) it cannot provide the higher match because there is a lack of available non-Federal resources due, for instance, to the pressing demand for its use elsewhere; 2) the project is addressing major causes of distress in the area to be served and requires the unique characteristics of the applicant, which will not participate if it must provide all or part of a 50 percent non-Federal share; or 3) the project is for the benefit of local, State, regional or national economic development efforts and will be of no or only incidental benefit to the recipient. See 13 CFR § 307.7(c).

Funds from other Federal awards may not be considered matching funds. The nature of contribution (cash versus in-kind) and the amount of matching funds will be taken into consideration in the review process. Cash contributions are preferred.

IV. Proposal and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Proposal Package

Proposal packages consist of the first page of the ED-900P "Preapplication for Financial Assistance" (OMB Approval No. 0610-0094) and a proposal narrative. This form is available on EDA's website, <http://www.eda.gov>. Paper preapplications are also available:

For proponents in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma or Texas, from:

Economic Development Administration
Austin Regional Office
327 Congress Avenue, Suite 200
Austin, Texas 78701
512-381-8144

For proponents in Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah or Wyoming, from:

Economic Development Administration
Denver Regional Office
1244 Speer Boulevard, Room 670
Denver, Colorado 80204
303-844-4715

B. Content and Form of Proposal Submission

In addition to the first page of the ED-900P, interested organizations must submit the proposal narrative referred to on page three of the ED-900P, limited to a maximum of 15 pages, including any and all attachments and supporting documentation, in the following format (proponents are not required to use the ED-900P narrative format or provide additional information as requested in the ED-900P):

Section 1. Program Focus of the Proposed University Center

- a. Identify the program focus of the University Center (for example, providing technical assistance or conducting applied research).
- b. If the University Center will have more than one focus, indicate the anticipated percentage of each focus.

Section 2. Service Area, Needs of Service Area and Target Audience of the Proposed University Center.

- a. Define the proposed geographic service area of the University Center.
- b. Present the economic development needs, issues and opportunities of the proposed service area.
- c. Identify the target audience of the proposed University Center, especially the economically distressed parts of the service area.

Section 3. Scope of Work and Anticipated Impacts and Benefits

- a. Outline the scope of work to be undertaken by the proposed University Center. This section must be organized under three elements: (i) providing technical assistance; (ii) conducting applied research; and (iii) disseminating results of the activities of the University Center. For this program, providing technical assistance includes all economic development activities undertaken at the request of an entity outside the sponsoring institution. Conducting applied research encompasses University Center-initiated economic development activities which benefit the general public. Disseminating results of the activities of the University Center includes efforts undertaken to inform the University Center's target audience of its assistance and preparing semi-annual and annual narrative reports to EDA. Only a small percentage

of the scope of work should be devoted to (iii), disseminating results of the activities of the University Center.

- b. Identify the anticipated impacts and benefits of the proposed University Center. EDA is particularly interested in estimates of: (i) private sector jobs that will be created and funds that will be invested as a result of the activities of the University Center; (ii) the percentage of University Center clients initiating action as a result of the assistance provided by the University Center; and (iii) the percentage of those clients who achieve the anticipated results.

Section 4. Supporting Information

- a. Discuss the institution's capacity and experience in operating technical assistance programs, especially those focused on economic development.
- b. Identify other organizations in the proposed service area that provide potentially complementary or duplicative services.
- c. Outline the process or strategy the proposed University Center will follow to maximize coordination with relevant entities to minimize duplication of services.
- d. Outline the process or strategy for coordinating and accessing key resources of the sponsoring institution to support economic development efforts.
- e. Provide evidence of strong support (both financial and non-financial) from the leadership of the sponsoring institution for the University Center and its activities.
- f. Present a project budget, including a breakdown by Federal and non-Federal shares, for each of the three years and an identification of the sources of the non-Federal funding. (Note: At least 80 percent of EDA funding must be allocated to direct costs of program delivery.) Ordinarily, applicants are expected to provide a 50% non-Federal share of project costs. EDA may, however, increase its share up to 75% if (i) the applicant demonstrates that the project is not feasible without, and merits, a reduction of the non-Federal share, or (ii) the project qualifies for a supplemental grant fulfilling the requirements of 13 CFR 307.7(c)(2).

Current University Centers in service areas of the Philadelphia, Chicago, Seattle and Atlanta regional offices will not have to compete for continuation funding in FY 2004. Each of these University Centers must, however, submit a narrative statement, in the format outlined in this section, as part of its application for continuation funding in FY 2004. Due to the late notice of this competition, EDA will also provide continuation funding to all current University Centers in the Denver and Austin regional offices to extend their existing awards through June 30, 2004. The appropriate EDA regional office will contact each current University Center and notify it of the procedures to follow for obtaining FY 2004 funding.

C. Electronic Submission

EDA is not currently able to accept electronic submission of proposal packages.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Proposals submitted under this competition must be received by the Denver or Austin regional office by Friday, May 14, 2004, 5:00 p.m., local time. Proposals received after that time will not be considered for funding. EDA will determine when a proposal package has been submitted before the deadline by date and time stamping the proposal packages as they are physically received in the EDA regional office. Proponents are advised that mail security measures may delay receipt of U.S.P.S. mail for up to two weeks. Proponents may wish to use a guaranteed, overnight delivery service.

E. Funding Restrictions

1. Direct Cost Requirement

At least 80 percent of EDA funding must be allocated to direct costs of program delivery.

2. Allowable Costs

Allowable costs are determined by reference to the Office of Management and Budget Circular A-21, "Cost Principles for Educational Institutions". Generally, costs that are allowable include salaries, supplies, and other expenses that are reasonable and necessary for the completion of the scope of work.

F. Other Submission Requirements

Proposal packages under this competition must be submitted to the Denver or Austin regional offices at the addresses listed in Part IV. Facsimile transmissions of proposal packages will not be accepted.

V. Proposal Review Information

A. Criteria

EDA investments in proposed University Centers will be competitively evaluated on their ability to meet or exceed the following investment policy guidelines (each criterion will be given roughly equivalent weight):

1. ***Be market-based and results driven.*** An investment in an EDA University Center will capitalize on the university's competitive strengths and will bolster regional economic competitiveness, resulting in tangible, quantifiable improvements in regional economic health – such as increased numbers of higher-skill, higher-wage jobs, increased tax revenue or increased private sector investment.
2. ***Have strong organizational leadership.*** An investment will have strong leadership, relevant project management experience, and a significant commitment of human resources talent to ensure a high-performing University Center. Specifically for University Center investments, this includes; a) the extent to which the proposed University Center will maximize coordination with other relevant organizations and

avoid duplication of services offered by other organizations, b) the extent to which the University Center will access, take advantage of, and be supported by the other resources present at the sponsoring institution – especially the institution’s economic development activities, c) the degree of evidence demonstrating the support and commitment (both financial and non-financial) of the proposed University Center’s mission from the leadership of the sponsoring institution.

3. ***Advance productivity, innovation and entrepreneurship.*** An investment in a proposed University Center will embrace the principles of entrepreneurship, enhance regional industry clusters, and leverage and link technology innovators (university research) with the private sector to create the conditions for greater productivity, innovation and higher-skill, higher-wage job creation.
4. ***Look beyond the immediate economic horizon, anticipate economic changes, and diversify the local and regional economy.*** A University Center’s activities will be part of an overarching, long-term comprehensive economic development strategy that enhances a region’s success in achieving a rising standard of living.

Proponents are encouraged to link their responses directly to the content and form requirements listed in Sections 1-4 of Part IV.B above.

In making its recommendations on which institutions should be invited to submit a full application, the EDA review team will strive to avoid the concentration of program funding in a single or very limited number of geographic areas. For that reason, EDA cannot predict a minimum ranking of a successful proposal.

B. Review and Selection Process

1. Initial Evaluation and Technical Review of the Proposals

EDA’s Denver and Austin regional offices will conduct an initial administrative and technical review of each proposal package to determine its completeness and compliance with the requirements.

2. Review Panel

EDA’s Denver and Austin regional offices will conduct an internal review of each proposal meeting the requirements of this solicitation. This review will be conducted by a minimum of three EDA staff using the criteria provided in Section V.A.

C. Selection Factors

EDA expects to fund the highest ranking proposals submitted under this competition solicitation. However, EDA may select proposals out of order for several reasons, including:

1. Availability of funding;

2. Geographic balance in distribution of funds;
3. Program priorities and policy factors as set out in Sections I.B. and III; or
4. Applicant's performance under previous awards.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Funding should begin under this competition on August 1, 2004.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Successful proponents under the competition solicitation will be invited to submit a complete application by the Denver or Austin regional office. This invitation is not, however, a guarantee that funding will be provided. Unsuccessful proponents will be notified that their proposal was not recommended for funding. Unsuccessful proposals will be retained in the EDA regional office for one year, after which they will be destroyed.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Administrative and national policy requirements for all Department of Commerce awards are contained in the Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements, published in the Federal Register on October 1, 2002 (66 FR 49917), as amended by the Federal Register notice published on October 30, 2002 (67 FR 66109). These notices may be accessed by entering the Federal Register volumes and page numbers noted in the previous sentence at the following website:
www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/retrieve.html.

C. Reporting

All recipients are required to submit financial and performance (technical) reports. All financial reports must be submitted in triplicate (one original and two copies) to the EDA Program Officer. Reports are due on a semi-annual schedule and must be submitted no later than 30 days following the end of the six-month period from the start date of the award. Final reports are due 90 days after the award expiration.

VII. Agency Contact(s)

EDA's web site, <http://www.eda.gov>, contains additional information on EDA and its programs. You may also contact EDA's Denver and Austin regional offices, at the addresses and telephone numbers listed in Section IV.A.